

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-09

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 SAJ-01 SAM-01 IO-10 CIAE-00

DODE-00 PM-03 H-01 INR-07 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01

RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 /078 W

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R 071548Z JAN 75

FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2195

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

USINT BAGHDAD UNN

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E.O. 11652: N/A DECON 1/7/76

TAGS: PFOR EG SY UR

SUBJECT: POSTPONEMENT OF BREZHNEV'S MIDDLE EAST VISIT

REF: BEIRUT 0061

1. DURING SOCIAL FUNCTION JAN 3 EMBOFF HAD OPPORTUNITY DISCUSS
POSTPONEMENT OF BREZHNEV ME VISIT WITH LOCAL TASS CORRESPONDENT,
VICTOR KOPYTIN. LATTER, AFTER INITIALLY PUTTING FORWARD
"BAD HEALTH" EXPLANATION, ELABORATED MORE FUNDAMENTAL SET OF
REASONS WHICH HE SAID HAD CONVINCED MOSCOW THAT "TIME WAS NOT
RIGHT" FOR VISIT.

2. IN FIRST PLACE, ACCORDING TO KOPYTIN, "GENERAL TENSE ME
ATMOSPHERE" -- REINFORCED BY ALMOST DAILY INCIDENTS IN GOLAN
AND ACROSS ISRAELI-LEBANESE BORDER--DID NOT LEND ITSELF TO
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SUCCESSFUL VISIT.

3. SECONDLY, EGYPTIANS PROVED UNWILLING TO ACCOMMODATE SOV'S DESIRE TO RECONVENE GENEVA CONFERENCE. KOPYTIN SAID SADAT'S SUPPORT OF SECRETARY KISSINGER'S "STEP-BY-STEP" APPROACH TO SOLVING ME CRISIS HAS SIGNIFICANTLY IRRITATED SOVS. USSR SEES GREAT DANGER IN ONE-MAN DIPLOMACY AND IN BILATERAL AGREEMENTS, AS LATTER WOULD OBVIOUSLY FOCUS ON SINAI, WITH DANGER THAT SYRIANS AND PLO, FEELING INCREASINGLY ISOLATED, MAY ACT IN "NEGATIVE WAY." KOPYTIN EMPHASIZED THAT SOVS WANT TO BE MORE CLOSELY ASSOCIATED WITH PEACE INITIATIVE AND VIEW GENEVA AS BEST VEHICLE FOR USSR PARTICIPATION. WHILE RECOGNIZING PUBLIC FORUM IS "NOTORIOUSLY UNPRODUCTIVE, "SOVS BELIEVE "REAL NEGOTIATING" WOULD TAKE PLACE IN CLOSED "COMMITTEES". HE STATED THAT ATTENDANCE OF PLO WOULD BE MATTER FOR PARTIES AT GENEVA TO DISCUSS AFTER CONFERENCE IS RECONVENED.

4. AS THIRD REASON, KOPYTIN NOTED THAT TIMING OF VISITS BY SHAH OF IRAN TO EGYPT AND KING FEISAL TO SYRIA WAS VERY DISPLEASING TO USSR. (SHAH'S VISIT WAS "LESS BOthersome AS USSR TRYING TO FOSTER BETTER RELATIONS WITH IRAN.") KOPYTIN ADDED THAT TIME NEWSTOUR'S VISIT TO SYRIA DID NOT REALLY BOTHER SOVS, AS MOSCOW RECEIVES SEVERAL US "CAPITALISTS" EVERY DAY.

5. KOPYTIN REPEATEDLY DENIED THAT DISAGREEMENT RE RETURN OF SOV EXPERTS TO EGYPT WAS ISSUE IN POSTPONEMENT OF BREZHNEV'S VISIT, AND HE ASKED RHETORICALLY, "WHAT DO EXPERTS GET YOU, ANYWAY?" NOR DID HE GIVE CREDENCE TO REPORTS THAT RUSSIAN DOMESTIC PRESSURES CONTRIBUTED TO POSTPONEMENT, CITING ONE-MAN SHOW BREZHNEV CONDUCTED (OR WAS ALLOWED TO CONDUCT) AT VALADIVOSTOK. IN CONCLUSION, KOPYTIN EMPHASIZED BREZHNEV'S POSTPONEMENT DID NOT RPT NOT SIGNIFY DETERIORATION OF RELATIONS WITH EGYPT, NOTING THAT CAIRO AND MOSCOW STATEMENTS ANNOUNCING POSTPONEMENT HAS BEEN "MUCH TOO CORDIAL TO ALLOW SUPPOSITION THAT RELATIONS HAD COOLED."

GODLEY

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